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INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 0293
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRANCE WANTS TO JOIN SOMALIA CONTACT GROUP

REF: STATE 93874

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt. Reas
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11. (C) MFA AF DAS-Equivalent Helene Le Gal demarched Africa Watcher on June 13 to convey displeasure at France's exclusion from the newly formed Somalia Contact Group. France is among the few nations in the European Union, including the UK, Sweden and Italy, which are actively engaged on Somalia matters, she claimed. The MFA has earmarked 300,000 euro for its embassy in Nairobi to apply to Somalia-related projects, the first such budget allocation for Somalia in 15 years. Moreover, France intends to provide military training to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) at the French military base in Djibouti, once questions over the applicability of the UN arms embargo are resolved. Most significantly, Le Gal vaunted French access to TFG Prime Minister Ghedi, noting that the MFA had placed a Frenchman, David Bourza, in Jowhar as an adviser. Bourza's close relationship with Ghedi dates back to the latter's previous association with UNDP, she said. While Bourza is apparently a UNDP official, Le Gal said the MFA pays his salary and maintains close contact, facilitating a special French channel to the TFG.

12. (C) Africa Watcher responded that the core membership of the International Contact Group was meant to be compact. Other parties may be able to participate as observers on a limited, ad hoc basis. Moreover, the European Commission would participate as a core member, thereby allowing France an indirect voice. Le Gal reiterated the MFA argument for French membership in the International Contact Group. She commented that she had also instructed Washington-based French diplomat and Africa Watcher Guillaume Lacroix to pursue the issue.

13. (SBU) Guidance Request: Please advise on an appropriate embassy response to the French request to join the International Contact Group.

Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>

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